

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed June 5, 2003. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected all the claims pending in the application. After a Restriction Requirement in the application, only Claims 1-14, 22-35, and 43-56 are now under consideration. The rejection with respect to all of the pending claims is traversed.

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

The specification is being amended to correct a minor typographical error at page 21, line 10, where the number of enemy characters shown at the bottom of Figure 5 was mistakenly indicated in the specification as "6", even though the drawing clearly shows 9 enemy characters. The specification is being amended to recite "9" as the proper number.

SUBSTANTIVE REJECTION OF THE CLAIMS

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-4, 9, 22-25, 30, 43-46, and 51 under Section 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,409,604 to Matsuno and rejected Claims 5, 6, 26, 27, 47, and 48 under Section 103(a) as being obvious in view of Matsuno. The Examiner rejected Claims 7, 8, 10-14, 28, 29, 31-35, 49, 50, and 52-56 under Section 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Matsuno and U.S. Patent No. 6,375,571 to Ohnuma.

Section 102 Rejection over Matsuno

The pending claims are generally directed to an information processing system, such as an electronic game console that can be connected to a television, with a novel technique for targeting objects in a virtual game environment. Claim 1,

for example, recites:

displaying one or more candidate objects on a display screen;
displaying a candidate range indicator on the display screen in response to actuation of a candidate input interface on an input device, the candidate range indicator comprising a visual indication of a candidate range for the initial object;

displaying a visual indication in association with a first candidate object in response to the first candidate object intersecting at least a portion of the candidate range indicator on the display screen, the visual indication being associated with a first designation input interface on the input device; and

causing a predetermined action from the initial object with respect to the candidate object in response to actuation of the first designation input interface.

In the application, a "candidate" object is also referred to as an "opponent" or "enemy" object (see, for example, page 13, lines 5-7). The operation of displaying a candidate range indicator in response to a candidate input interface on an input device is illustrated, for example, by Figures 4, 7, and 8 of the application, which illustrate displaying a range indicator 440 and initiating a combat mode in response to a game player using the controller 120. See also the paragraph bridging page 16 and page 17 of the specification.

The next recited operation of Claim 1 involves "displaying a visual indication [when a first candidate object intersects the candidate range indicator], the visual indication being associated with a first designation input interface on the input device." An example of the claimed "visual indication" is provided in Figure 7 and Figure 8, which show an attack icon 710 that is displayed next to candidate objects (targets) 420a, 420b that are located within the area of the range indicator 440. In this claimed feature, the visual indication is "associated with a first designation input interface," which can comprise a control button. For example, the attack icon 710

can be associated with one or more controller buttons 250, 255, 260, 265 of the game console (see the specification at page 26, lines 1-6 and Figure 7).

Matsuno does not show or suggest the feature of the visual indication that is associated with a first designation input interface on the input device. Matsuno is directed to the problem of providing 3-D representations of video game environments to show, in three dimensions, the effective range of an attack (col. 1, lines 60-64).

Matsuno describes a system that displays a "range area" comprising an "attackable area" of a virtual environment (col. 6, lines 35-36; col. 7, line 3; Fig. 5) and Matsuno also shows an "effect area" comprising an area in which the effect of an attack reaches (col. 6, lines 20-22; col. 7, line 29; Fig. 6). For example, in Fig. 22 of Matsuno, a spherical effect area 92 indicates that an enemy character 82 positioned within the effect area 92 will be "covered" by an attack that is authorized (col. 12, lines 47-51).

Matsuno says nothing about associating a controller button input interface with a visual indication of a candidate (target) object, in response to that object intersecting a candidate range indicator, as recited in Claim 1. A similar limitation is contained in each of the other pending independent claims (Claim 22 and Claim 43). Therefore, none of the pending independent claims (Claims 1, 22, 43) are anticipated by Matsuno, and neither are the rejected claims that are dependent therefrom (Claims 2-4, 9, 23-25, 30, 44-46, 51).

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Section 103 Rejection over Matsuno

The Examiner rejected Claims 5, 6, 26, 27, 47, and 48 under Section 103(a) as being obvious in view of Matsuno. This rejection is also traversed.

It is apparent that Matsuno says nothing about a "visual indication being associated with a first designation input interface on [an] input device" because Matsuno is not directed to the display device-input control device interface problem to which the pending claims refer. Rather, Matsuno is concerned with displaying a 3-D representation of effective attack range (col. 1, lines 60-64). Thus, Matsuno does not describe the claimed display features, and gives no details of the control device, and provides no suggestion of how the display features that are provided might interface with the input control device. In contrast, the pending application provides details concerning the input control device (see Figures 1, 2, 7, 10, and 12) and the relationship of the controls to the display icons (see page 26, lines 1-14; page 28, line 20 through page 29, line 4; and page 30, lines 9-13).

Therefore, there is no suggestion for Matsuno to provide the claim features that are missing from the Matsuno patent, as described above, and therefore pending Claims 5, 6, 26, 27, 47, and 48 are not rendered obvious in view of Matsuno.

Accordingly, all of the claims rejected over Matsuno are patentable, comprising Claims 1-6, 9, 22-27, 30, 43-48, and 51.

Section 103 Rejection over Matsuno and Ohnuma

The Examiner rejected Claims 7, 8, 10-14, 28, 29, 31-35, 49, 50, and 52-56 under Section 103 as being obvious in view of Matsuno and Ohnuma. All of these

rejected claims depend (directly or indirectly) from the independent claims discussed above. Ohnuma does not make up for the deficiencies of Matsuno with respect to the independent claims and does not provide a suggestion for the additional features recited in these rejected claims. Therefore, Claims 7, 8, 10-14, 28, 29, 31-35, 49, 50, and 52-56 are not rendered obvious in view of Matsuno and Ohnuma, but rather, these claims are patentable.

Ohnuma relates to an entertainment system, such as a game console, in which a button icon is displayed to indicate a time during which successive activations of an input device control button can change parameters that modify attack effectiveness. See Ohnuma at column 11, lines 54-60 and column 12, lines 1-7. For example, rapidly pressing a game console decision button 112d (Fig. 3), as many times as possible, is necessary to increase the effect of a "magic attack" (see col. 11, lines 54-60; see also col. 15, line 61 through col. 16, line 6). The changing of attack effectiveness parameters has nothing to do with the claimed feature of associating a controller button interface with a visual indication of a candidate (target) object, in response to that object intersecting a candidate range indicator, as recited in the pending independent claims (Claims 1, 22, and 43).

Thus, even if Ohnuma could be combined with Matsuno, the result would still be lacking the claimed feature of associating a controller button interface with a visual indication of a candidate (target) object, in response to that object intersecting a candidate range indicator. In addition, the combination would not provide the particular claimed features added by the limitations of Claims 7, 8, 10-14, 28, 29, 31-

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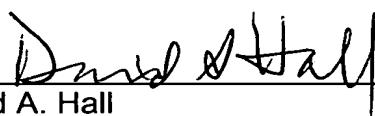
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35, 49, 50, and 52-56. Therefore, these claims are not rendered obvious by the combination of Matsuno and Ohnuma.

The remaining art of record has been reviewed and has been found to not make up for the deficiencies noted above for Matsuno and Ohnuma. Accordingly, it is submitted that all of the pending claims (comprising Claims 1-14, 22-35, and 43-56) are patentable as filed.

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